

## Appendix D

### Summary of the Planetary Society's Public Opinion Survey

Bruce Betts and Emily Lakdawalla  
The Planetary Society  
Pasadena, California

In conjunction with the Solar System Exploration Survey, the Planetary Society carried out an independent public opinion survey. Since this survey was not done in a controlled and rigorous fashion, significant bias may be latent in the results. However, these biases have been evaluated. The survey results are expected to have value as a guide to what interested people think about and expect from the Solar System Exploration program.

The survey focused on those in the general public who have a particular interest in planetary exploration. Billed as “your opportunity to tell NASA how you would like to be informed about its missions and about future priorities in planetary exploration,” the survey asked the following questions:

- What, in your opinion, should be the ultimate purpose of U.S. space exploration?
- Choose (from a list of 15) 5 of the following missions that you think are most important for space agencies to accomplish in the next decade.

Several other questions were also asked that are not particularly pertinent to the present study. The results (paraphrased) found by the Planetary Society are as follows:

1. What, in your opinion, should be the ultimate purpose of the U.S. planetary exploration program? (The top three choices only are given here.)
  - a. Scientific exploration (ranked first by 23 percent, first rank overall);
  - b. Determining suitability for human colonization (ranked first by 25 percent, second rank overall); and
  - c. Looking for dangers to Earth from space (ranked first by 25 percent, third rank overall).
2. Choose five of the following missions that you think are most important for space agencies to accomplish in the next decade. (The top five choices are given here.)
  - a. Mars (91 percent)
  - b. Moon (65 percent)
  - c. Europa (62 percent)
  - d. Pluto/Kuiper Belt (37 percent)
  - e. Io (34 percent)

Complete results of this survey, which attracted 54,195 responses, can be obtained from the Planetary Society by visiting its Web site at <[http://www.planetary.org/html/survey/survey\\_results.htm](http://www.planetary.org/html/survey/survey_results.htm)> or by e-mailing [bruce.betts@planetary.org](mailto:bruce.betts@planetary.org) with questions or to request further details.